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REPEATED U.S. REVERSES

• In Dau Tieng Region

At Ben Tranh Attacked
For the Third Time: 500
U.S. Casualties

• East of Saigon

A Second Thai Battalion
Wiped Out

• In Tra Vinh Province

A Puppet Battalion Whit-
tled Down

• In Four Mekong Delta Provinces

64 War Vessels and
Launches Sunk Or Burnt

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PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH'S CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO SOUTH VIET NAM ARMED FORCES AND PEOPLE

Hanoi, March 16, 1969

To President NGUYEN HUU THO,
President of the Presidium
of the Central Committee of the South
Viet Nam National Front for Liberation
(with request to forward to our dear compa-
trials, cadres and fighters in South Viet Nam)

EARLY Spring this year, in their relentless and widespread attacks on the enemy, the armed forces and people of the heroic South displayed a very great skill and achieved very considerable successes.

I am very glad to send you my warmest and most affectionate congratulations. For all their heavy losses, the US aggressors have not yet given up their aggressive design and reconciled themselves to withdrawing their troops from our country.

Therefore, we must continue fighting with vigour and striking devastating blows till the US-puppets are thoroughly defeated and South Viet Nam is completely li-berated.

I send you many kisses.

With affectionate and "determined-to-win" greetings,
UNCLE HO

TALKS have been held in

Hanoi between a delegation of the DRVN led by Premier Pham Van Dong and the delegation of the South Viet Nam NFL led by Dr Phung Van Cung, Vice-President of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Front, President of the South Viet Nam World Peace Committee and President of the South Viet Nam Liberation Red Cross.

The two delegations have posted each other on the solidarity between the people and armed forces of both zones, on their fighting, production and building of the rear and on the brilliant victories won by them. On the basis of a perfect identity of views concerning the assessment of the situation, both delegations have reaffirmed that the urgent and sacred task now facing the Vietnamese people as a whole is to perseveringly drive ably the resistance against American aggression, for national salvation, until total victory, in order to liberate the South, defend the North and ultimately achieve peaceful national reunification.

The talks were held in an atmosphere of brotherhood between North and South.

TALKS BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM GOVERNMENT AND SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION DELEGATIONS



(Excerpts from an article in the **Minority of One**)

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IN THE LARGE SOUTHERN FRONT MILITARY OPERATIONS

AS the PLAF offensive continues at an accelerated tempo since February 23, *Quang* Press Agency gave last week details of important successes achieved.

The most remarkable ones were won **ON THE SAIGON FRONT** clearly north and east of that city.

In **Dau Tieng** region, 61 km northwest of Saigon, the Americans just suffered a crushing setback. On March 13, attacking the enemy in village No 2, the patriots killed and wounded 143 GIs and captured many others. On March 13, in village No 22, they put out of action 70 enemy troops and downed three choppers. Three days later, on March 16th **Bien Tranh** position, 16 km southwest of Dau Tieng, was the target of a third attack (since February 23) in which the enemy CP as well as 2 infantry companies of Brigade 4, **Trope Lighting Division** and 2 artillery companies were wiped out after a two-hour battle: 940 GIs were on the casualty list, 20 vehicles including many tanks and armoured cars, and

16 heavy guns destroyed or damaged. Let's recall that in the same position in less than 48 hours (between February 23 and 25) two U.S. mixed battalions, of about one thousand GIs, had been put out of action.

Farther to the northwest, in **Tay Ninh** province, on March 8 last, southwest of the provincial capital, an enemy counter-attack was fought off: 160 enemy troops were killed or wounded, 3 choppers downed and 2 cannons destroyed. The following day near **Hoa Son** 1 km west south-west of Tay Ninh, 130 enemy soldiers were put out of action. On the night of March 10, an American plane was shot down. On March 11, 20 km southwest of Tay Ninh, was alarmed and lost many men, 20 tanks and armoured cars. The commander of Brigade 4, U.S. Infantry Division 25, in **Tay Ninh**, north northeast of Tay Ninh, and **Tay Ninh** post, 20 km west southwest of Tay Ninh, were assaulted many times between March 2 and 7 and suffered 143 casualties.

On Highway No 13, 37 km north of Saigon, the Amer-

ican base at **Quan Loi** was pounded by the PLAF artillery on March 12 and 13: 160 enemy troops including over one hundred GIs were killed or wounded, 6 helicopters downed or destroyed and 3 military vehicles destroyed.

East of Saigon, on the road to **Vung Tau**, on March 6, almost at the same time as the third successful engagement was being fought at **Ben Trai**, the PLAF wiped out Battalion 3, Brigade 1, **Thai Black Panther Division** in dense rubber plantation. **Loe An** village, near **Long Thanh**. It was the second Thai battalion put out of action in this locality within 10 days. In Saigon, the city's self-defence militiamen between February 23 and March 13 mounted at least 12 actions, chiefly against policemen and security agents. A police station in the second town-district and an electric transformer station near **Nguyen Van Thieu** post, "Independence Palace" were blown up and about twenty ruffians and traitors punished.

IN THE MIKONG DELTA, the PLAF were particularly active in **My Tho** province about 60 km southwest of Saigon between March 2 and 7. **My Tho** city, HQ of U.S. Infantry Division 9, was na-

ny times bombarded by the PLAF and 12 choppers and 2 cannons were destroyed and 3 vessels damaged. On March 15, the PLAF struck at major targets of the provincial capital such as HQ of puppet Infantry Division 9, a military sector (CP the base of two artillery battalions, the military training centre and the airport: 80 per cent of the installations were destroyed and more than one hundred enemy soldiers killed or wounded at the training centre and the base of one of the two battalions.

Meanwhile, 11 other targets in various urban centres of the province were also hit: 66 adverse troops (over 100 GIs) were put out of action, 11 military vehicles and 3 cannons destroyed. On March 15, Highway No 4 was put out of order by the destruction of an important bridge near **My Tho** which was blown up on the night of March 10 in a heavy artillery shelling.

Farther South, in **Tra Vinh** province, on March 7, the PLAF badly mauled a puppet battalion by inflicting on it 250 casualties (including the battalion commander) in a rush at **Hiep**, about one hundred kilometres southwest of Saigon.

In **Ben Tre** province, on the night of March 14, a 5th wave of assaults was staged against the city, one of the most important positions in the provincial capital such as

airfield, artillery park, armoured car base, administrative offices, "pacification" teams, etc. putting 140 enemy soldiers out of action.

The enemy riverine task forces also sustained heavy losses: between February 16 and March 9, in 4 provinces alone, 64 vessels and motor launches were sunk or set afloat.

IN THE NORTHERN VIET NAM between March 13 and 16, **Cao Viet**, **Dong Ha** and **Tan Lam**, along Highway No 9, came under heavy PLAF fire. 450 adverse troops (including 200 GIs) were killed or wounded, a puppet company near **Gia Linh**, an American company North of **Tan Lam** and a mixed company North of **Dong Ha**, were wiped out.

In the engagements on **Ca Co** (Hill, west of **Da Nang**) between March 4 and 15, 350 enemy troops were mowed down and 14 choppers grounded.

In the first ten days of March, in **Da Nang-Chu Lai** region where fighting is still raging, the PLAF killed, wounded or captured 1,100 adverse soldiers including 350 GIs, destroyed 28 aircraft, mostly choppers, destroyed 23 military vehicles and overpowered a troop train. In **Quang Nam** region, the South Korean Tiger Division lost 400 men and 8 choppers. The Viet People's Army occupy **Nai Nung** between February 27 and March 31.

Saigon Cracks Down on Buddhists

ON March 13, 1969, the 9th Corps Area Field Tribunal sentenced the Venerable **Thich Thien Huan**, Deputy Head of the Buddhist Institute, Head of the General Department of the Buddhist Youth in Saigon, to 10 years' hard labour, Saigon information sources reported. Charged by Washington's henchmen with "having hidden rebels and concealed illegal arms and documents", **Thich Thien Huan** was arrested on Feb. 23, 1969, with 50 students of the Saigon Buddhist Youth, 8 students accused of "rebellion" and tried at the same time as **Thich Thien Minh** got penalties from 3 years' imprisonment to 20 years' hard labour.

Before the tribunal the Venerable **Thich Thien Minh** strongly refuted the government's charges. A student shouted: "I am not guilty!"

Following this fascist trial the Buddhists published protest resolutions in numerous meetings and distributed leaflets severely condemning the Saigon administration. They stressed in a declaration that persecution of Buddhists should be expected to last as long as the "present government" was in power. The report stated a "sit in" in the pagoda of **Phu Vien** to denounce the Saigon regime and demand the re-establishment of peace.

On March 16, the **Viet Nam League of Buddhist Students** sent the Saigon administration a resolution

demanding that the Venerable **Thich Thien Minh** and the imprisoned students be set free. The Venerable **Thich Thien Huan**, Head of the Buddhist Institute, rejected the false accusation against his deputy and stated: "When the nation is in distress, Christians and Buddhists should get and struggle together." Buddhist superior **Thich Thien Huan**, former chief Representative of the Viet Nam United Buddhist Church in **Van Hanh** and **Thua Thien** areas, deputy chairman of the Viet Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces, made public a declaration against the fascist measure taken by the **Thieu-Kieu** clique, calling on the Buddhist believers and the South Vietnamese people to join forces to overthrow the latter and help set up a peace cabinet.

One day after the trial, Buddhists held a meeting in the **An Quang Pagoda** against such an "inhuman" measure. In their statement, they denounced **Nguyen Van Thieu** for having "taken advantage of the support of foreigners (U.S. imperialism, Editor) to carry on Ngo Dinh Diem's program aimed at annihilating Buddhism in numerous and savage ways."

It will be recalled that Buddhist in Saigon and other South Viet Nam cities had done their bits in toppling **Nguyen Diem** in 1954 and were among the first to register their actions in 1968.

SEIZURE OF ACCOUNTS and Cabinet Shake-up in Saigon

PREMIER **Tran Van Huong** had a close shave of it on March 5, 1969 in Saigon.

The thing was arrested there and then. He was found carrying papers of the "government" army and a Colt 72. He is said to confess to having received 100,000 piasters for the coup. Nothing very sensational, indeed, considering the present political climate in this city. Eighteen years earlier, **Tran Anh**, Rector ad interim of the Saigon University, had fallen to the bullets of another hired gunman and **Tran Van Huong** had sent a representative to his funeral. The same **Tran Anh** was a close friend and advisor to **Le Minh Tri**, ex-Minister of Education, himself victim of a grenade in January last.

Remarkable enough, "the Saigon administration has refused to disclose the identity of the murderer who has just missed **Tran Huong** by a hairbreadth."

What is most disturbing is that many have found, not without foundation, some close associates of **Tran Anh** who had taken the lives of a group of pro-Ky officers in May last year, the grenade that killed **Le Minh Tri** in January and the 12 used against **Tran**

Huong. Hardly had **Tran Van Huong** recovered from the shock when **Nguyen Van Thieu** announced with a great ballyhoo on March 12 the ruffing of his cabinet.

A vice-premier and eight new ministers and vice-ministers have been picked up to team up with **Tran Van Huong** in the new government. And what a "government"! A certain **Nguyen Van Huong**, ex-deputy of **Ngo Dinh Diem** in the Western part of **Nam Bo**, was given the portfolio of education, which **Huong** had consulted with his functions of Prime Minister. General **Tran Thieu Kham** was promoted Vice-Premier and invested with wide powers. He has been especially entrusted with "pacification" and "construction" and concurrently with affairs which throw him to control from top to bottom the administration as well as the police, and to distribute grants at the provincial echelon.

It is also public knowledge that **Tran Thieu Kham**, a close associate of **Tran Anh** who has been at daggers drawn with **Ky**. Let us add that **Tran Anh**, a chief of bureau under **Diem**, became Minister of Agrarian Reform and Agriculture in

replacement of **Truong Thai Ton**, a **Ky** man.

In short, **Thieu** has killed several birds with one stone. He has clipped the wings of **Tran Van Huong** and ousted the last supporters of **Nguyen Cao Ky** from the governmental group while trying to cheat American and world opinion about his intention to change the "policy" of "bases" of his government. As can be seen, he is a shrewd man who will not stop at anything to keep himself in power.

Such is the government which **H. Cabot Lodge**, the chief of the American delegation to the Paris Conference, has not ceased describing as a "constitutional" and "representative" one.

But the South Vietnamese are not to be taken in. All these pulchre quarrels that have been the instrument of accounts, together with this cabinet reshuffle have only revealed the conflicts between various political groupings in Saigon and the fragility of the **Thieu-Huong** alliance. More than 100,000 people demanding the replacement of the traitors by traitors by a cabinet favouring restoration of peace in South Viet Nam.